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19 November 2009

Ms D Withers  
Headteacher  
Wren Spinney Community Special School  
Westover Road  
Off Westhill Drive  
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NN15 7LB

Dear Ms Withers

Ofsted survey inspection programme 2009/10: healthy eating in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, students and parents, during my visit with my colleague from the School Food Trust on 3 November 2009 to look at your work on healthier eating and school food provision.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified within the main text. All published reports will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with parents, students and staff; scrutiny of school documentation including your school evaluation and school food policy; analysis of students' work; and observation of two lessons, snack time and school lunch.

I undertook to provide a brief written version of the main points, made in our feedback at the end of the visit, to support development in healthier eating and school meals.

The quality of provision to promote healthy eating

The quality of provision to promote healthy eating is good with outstanding features.

Compliance with the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF's) food-based and nutrient-based standards for school food

Compliance with the DCSF's food-based and nutrient-based standards for school food is good.

- School lunches were fully compliant with the food-based standards, and met the majority of the 14 nutrient-based standards. The school works with the local authority for its nutrient analysis information, but this is not completed quickly enough to allow for adjustments to be made to the current meal cycle.
- The majority of food and drink provided at break time was compliant with the food-based standards, and the school should continue to encourage students to select drinks such as water or milk instead of squash at break times.

### The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is outstanding.

- The small, multi-purpose hall is transformed into a calm dining room over the lunch period. The two sittings allow all students plenty of time to enjoy their meals. Students are sensitively encouraged to make their own choices about what to eat. 'Mingle' Fridays allow students to choose where they sit. Posters are positioned carefully and link well to students' learning about healthy eating. Time is also allowed at lunchtime for students to attend clubs of their choice.

### Helping students and parents to make healthier choices

Strategies for helping students and parents to make healthier choices are outstanding.

- Parents questioned are unanimous about the excellent care and information from the school concerning their children's eating habits. The school ensures that feeding routines from home are followed which encourages and helps the students to eat and enjoy their food. The daily home/school book informs parents of all the food and drinks consumed to enable the individual needs of every student to be met.

### Development of students' knowledge and personal skills

Development of students' knowledge and personal skills is outstanding.

- Every student is supported to choose their snacks and lunch each day. Students understand which foods they should eat little of and why and the importance of fruit and vegetables in their diet.
- The school's kitchen garden gives students the opportunity to grow and taste their own vegetables, much of which is cooked in the school kitchen for their lunches.
- Students are encouraged to be active and enjoy the new school gym, lunchtime and after-school clubs.

## Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is outstanding.

- Students are encouraged and involved in handling food to make a range of dishes. They are taken to the shops to buy ingredients which they then prepare in class. Those students who are anxious about handling different textures are gently introduced to new experiences. Through these experiences, students gain greater confidence in preparing and eating food with a wider range of ingredients.
- The student council is listened to and its suggestions are followed whenever possible.

## Planning the curriculum

Planning of the curriculum is good.

- Consistent messages are taught in science and personal and social development and these are explicitly linked to helping students make independent healthy choices. This is because the school appropriately takes the teaching of healthy lifestyles very seriously. Teachers understand the need to continually reinforce healthy eating messages.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- You, your senior team and governors all see eating healthily as a cornerstone for the education the school provides. You are aspirational for every student and your high expectations in respect of promoting healthy lifestyles are shared effectively. Thus, they effectively underpin ethos, curriculum, and learning.
- The decision to run your own catering service has enabled you to be highly responsive to the needs of individual students and to provide high-quality meals. The catering manager is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and the school is proactive in overcoming barriers to promoting healthy eating. Effective support is provided to any student, no matter how complex the situation. This sensitive management of students, especially those with most complex needs, enables them to benefit from all the opportunities the school provides to enjoy a healthy diet and to try new foods.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- ensure that the nutritional analysis of menus is carried out in time to enable any necessary adjustments to be made.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop healthier eating and provision for food in the school.

As I explained during the feedback, this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker  
Her Majesty's Inspector